The Duty of contending for the Faith.

A

SERMON

Preached before the Provincial Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling*, at their Meeting at *Stirling*, *April* 1732.

On Jude ver. 3.

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READER.

SOME of my Reverend Brethren, who heard this Diſcourſe delivered, were pleaſed to ſignifie their Approbation of it; and underſtanding that ſome general Heads, which were only hinted at in Publick, were farther enlarged and extended in my Notes; and having given it as their Opinion, that the publiſhing of it might be ſeaſonable, I was prevailed upon to comply with their Deſire.

I have added only a few Sentences in ſome Places, and inſerted ſome Ci-

tations in the Margin, which I thought neceſſary to illuſtrate the Subject; and humbly ſubmit the whole to the Judgment and Candour of my Reader, who, I hope, will conſtruct favourably of my ſmall Performance, which is not intended, to reflect upon any Perſon, but to vindicate ſome valuable Truths, which, in my Opinion, have been attacked and ſubverted by ſome within this Church. And this I have attempted in the firſt ſix Particulars, of the firſt general Head. And if I ſhall be convinced of any Miſtake, I have fallen into, I ſhall moſt frankly acknowledge it, and thank any that ſhall ſet me right.

SER-

A SERMON, &c.

Jude Ver. 3.

Beloved, when I gave all Diligence to write unto you of the common Salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and to exhort you, that you should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints.

THE Apostle *Jude* having inscribed his Epistle, he proceeds in our Text to exhort the Saints and the Church of Christ, to defend and maintain the Purity of the Christian Doctrine against the Errors and Heresies, by which the *Ebionites*, *Nicolaitans* and *Gnosticks*, the false Teachers

Teachers of theſe Times, attempted to overthrow and ſubvert it.

In the Beginning of this Verſe he accounts for the Reaſons which moved him to write them in this Manner, namely, his Love to them, his paſtoral Care over them, and the Danger they were in of being ſeduced by theſe corrupt Doctrines.

And in the latter Part of the Verſe, which is the Subject of our enſuing Diſcourſe, he lays down the neceſſary and ſeaſonable Exhortation, which he enforces and illuſtrates in the Sequel of this Epiſtle.

That which our Apoſtle calls upon all Chriſtians, in their reſpective Characters, to maintain and defend, is, *The Faith once delivered to the Saints*, that is, the Doctrine of the Faith in Chriſt, fully and unalterably delivered to the Church in the Holy Scriptures.

And the Duty exhorted to, is, *Earneſtly to contend for the Faith.* The compound Word ἐπαγωνίζομαι is exceeding ſtrong, and ſignifies to contend for the Faith in the moſt vigorous, reſolute, and unwearied Manner.

The Words, thus briefly explained, and laid open in their plain and obvious Meaning, lay before us the following doctrinal Propoſition, namely, That it is the Duty of all thoſe who profeſs the Name of Chriſt, in their reſpective Stations and Characters, to maintain and defend the Purity of the Chriſtian Doctrine, and more eſpecially theſe Truths of God which are attacked and ſubverted in their own Times.

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In diſcourſing this Subject, I ſhall endeavour, by Divine Aſſiſtance, I. To ſpeak of ſome Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, which we in this Church are in an eſpecial Manner, called upon to contend for at this Day. II. To ſhew what is imported in this Duty of contending earneſtly for the Faith. III. To diſcourſe briefly of the Means, in the Uſe of which all ſerious Chriſtians are obliged in their different Characters to contend for the Faith of the Goſpel. And conclude, By propoſing and enforcing the Exhortation in the Text, by a few Motives or Arguments.

We proceed in the *firſt* Place, To ſpeak of ſome Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, which have been attacked and ſubverted by ſome within this Church; and which therefore we are called upon in an eſpecial Manner to maintain and defend. And,

1. The Doctrine of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, his proper, true and ſupreme Deity, his independent Being, neceſſary Exiſtence and Generation, and his Being of one and the ſame Subſtance in Number with the Father and Holy Spirit, is an important and fundamental Article of the Chriſtian Faith, which we are called upon, in the moſt zealous Manner, to aſſert and defend againſt all the bold and pernicious Attempts that have been made to overthrow and ſubvert it. This Doctrine is diſplayed with the moſt convincing Evidence through the whole of Divine Revelation. But having upon ſome other Occaſion endeavoured to eſtabliſh and defend

it †, I ſhall not enlarge further upon it at preſent.

2. We are likewiſe taught in the Holy Scripture, that God made a Covenant with Mankind in *Adam*, and that *Adam* was a federal Head to his Poſterity.

It is very manifeſt, that God in Juſtice and Equity could have conſtitute *Adam* ſuch a federal Head: For it was arbitrary in a Sovereign God to give Man a Being, and to preſerve him in that Being or not, as ſeemed beſt in his Sight; and Man, as a dependent Creature, was obliged to obey his Creator, altho he had been encouraged to it by no Promiſe of future and laſting Felicity. The Promiſe of eternal Life was therefore voluntary and free, and what Man could not claim by Virtue of his own Obedience and Conformity to the Law *. And it muſt be acknowledged, that the Author of our Being might convey theſe undeſerved Bleſſings in what Manner he pleaſed, that is either upon our own perſonal good Behaviour, as he did with the Angels, or upon the Obedience and Perſeverance of the common Parent of Mankind.

The Scripture is plain, that God tranſacted with Mankind, and not meerly with the firſt two Individuals of the Kind. For, the

† The proper, true, and ſupreme Deity of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt proved and aſſerted from the Holy Scriptures.

* See Biſhop *Bull's* State of Man before the Fall, and *Weſtminſter* Confeſſion, *Chap.* vii. § 1.

the Grant of Dominion over the Inferior Creatures was made to the Human Race, and Mankind received the first Benediction, and were entitled to all the promised Blessings, upon performing the Condition required in that Transaction. And the Sanction of the Covenant of Works reached all Mankind, for it is declared by the Apostle *Paul*, that *all died in Adam*. And from this it follows, that all Mankind were under the Preceptive Part of that Covenant, because to suppose reasonable Creatures liable to suffer for the Breach of a Law, which neither in their own Persons, nor in their Representative they were obliged to fulfil, is to introduce a wild Opinion, which is neither supported by Reason nor Revelation, but is contradictory to both. And it is likewise plainly asserted in the Holy Scriptures, that *the* Law or Covenant of Works is become *Weak through the Flesh*, as to every Man, which supposeth, that before Sin entered, it was every way sufficient to entail Life and Immortality on Mankind, which it could do no otherwise, but by *Adam*'s Obedience as a publick Person. But not to digress from our present Purpose, by entering upon this Argument, I shall only further observe, that this Doctrine is confirmed and illustrated by the Apostle *Paul* in his Epistle to the *Romans* v. 12. †. Where he ex-

Gen. 1. 28.

1 Cor. 15. 22.

Rom. 8. 2

† Ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον, *In quo omnes peccaverunt*. Ἐφ' ᾧ being put for Ἐν which is not unusual in Scripture

expreſly affirms, *that all Mankind ſinned in Adam*, and that thereby they became juſtly liable to Death, the proper puniſhment of Sin (*b*). And it is plain, that Mankind could not otherwiſe Sin in *Adam*, but as he was the Federal Head of his Poſterity. It is all one to the Point in Hand, whether the Words Ἐφ' ᾧ be render'd *For that* or *In whom*. For tho' the latter Words ſeem to deliver this Doctrine more preciſely; yet it being affirmed according to the other rendering, That all who die, have ſinned, and it being certain that many die, who have not ſinned in their own Perſons, theſe muſt have ſinned in *Adam*; they could Sin no other way. And this Interpretation is ſupported by the Context, in which the Appoſtle affirms, *that by the Offence of one many were dead, that the Judgment was by one to condemnation, that by the offence of one Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation*; And from the Scope and Deſign of

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ture, and is often ſo uſed by the beſt Writers in the Greek Tongue. *Vid. Budæi Com. Ling. Græcæ* P. 506. This Reading was contended for by *Auſtin*, againſt the *Pelagians*, rejecting their *eo quod*. Mr. *Chubb* his pretended Metonymy in this Place, renders the Apoſtle's Reaſoning abſurd, and introduces a meer Tautology into the Text.

(*b*) *Proſper contra Colatorem, Cap.* 20. *Niſi forte dicatur in Adæ poſteros pœnam tranſiſſe, non culpam quod omnino falſo dicitur,———Nimis enim impium eſt hoc de Dei ſentire juſtitia, quod a prævaricatione liberos cum reis voluerit eſſe damnatos. Patet ergo culpa, ubi non latet pœna, & ſocietas peccati convincitur de communione ſupplicii: ut quod eſt humanæ miſeriæ non de inſtitutione Creatoris, ſed de Retributione ſit judicis.*

of the Apoſtle, which is to inſtruct us, that Chriſt's Righteouſneſs is imputed to his People, for Juſtification, in like Manner (*a*) as *Adam*'s Sin is imputed to all his Poſterity for Condemnation; and that the Imputation of both is founded upon the publick Repreſentation of theſe *two* diſtinct Perſons, the Firſt and ſecond *Adam*, each of *them the* Federal Heads of two diſtinct Families.

And ſeeing all Mankind ſinned in *Adam*, and by his Diſobedience were made Sinners, that is, upon his Fall, his Sin was legally imputed to and charged upon them; there is no ground to imagine, *that the* Souls of Infants ſince the Fall are created as Pure and Holy as *Adam*'s was created. Neither has that other Opinion, of the Salvation of all Infants dying in Infancy, any better Foundation. For we are aſſured from the ſacred Records, that they are all born in Sin, that by Nature they are Children of Wrath, and that they need the Spirit of God to regenerate and cleanſe them, and the Blood of Chriſt to juſtify them, which are exhibite in the Sacrament of Baptiſm by Divine Warrant diſpenſed unto them. And conſidering that Original Sin is the Root and Fountain of all that wickedneſs and impiety, which at any Time has

(*a*) Theodoret. *Dial.* 2. *Vide quomodo quæ Chriſti ſunt, cum iis quæ ſunt Adami conferantur.* ——— *Cum peccato juſtitia, cum execratione benedictio.* Chryſoſt. *Quum dixerit tibi Judæus, quomodo uniusChriſti virtute, mundus Salvatus eſt? Fores & dicere, quomodo & uno inobediente* Adam *mundus damnatus eſt?*

has been found among Men, we ſhall look upon it as a groundleſs Opinion, that all Infants even of Chriſtian and far more of Infidel Parents are ſaved, until it be made probable from the Holy Scriptures, that they are all elected (*a*), and before Death regenerated. And this, we ſuppoſe, no thinking Man will undertake.

3. We are likewiſe taught in the ſacred Writings, that carnal Reaſon is utterly unfit to determine in the Myſteries of revealed Religion; and that the Faith of Men to a Divine Revelation, cannot be ultimately reſolved into moral Arguments, founded upon Propoſitions naturally revealed.

The Apoſtle *Paul* tells us, That Men in a natural State, are dead in Sins, Vaſſals to their Luſts, and Slaves to Satan; That the Things of the Spirit of God, namely, Chriſt crucified and the Benefits of his Death for the Salvation of Sinners, are ſpiritually diſcerned, and that therefore the natural Man, by his Carnal Reaſon, neither doth nor can underſtand them, but looketh on them as fooliſhneſs. And further we are aſſured from the Holy Scriptures *that the carnal Mind is enmity againſt God*; that the Imaginations of the Heart of the unrenewed Man is evil and only evil continually; and that he is alienated from the Life of God, through his Ignorance and Blindneſs of Mind. All which ſay in

Eph. 2. 1, 2.

1 Cor. 2. 14.

Rom. 8. 7.

Gen. 6. 3.

Eph. 4. 8.

(*a*) Weſtminſter Confeſ. Ch. x. § 3.

in the ſtrongeſt Terms, that human Reaſon cannot determine in the Myſteries of revealed Religion; and that it can have no Right to reject ſuch of them, as it imagines are not agreeable to its Dictates and corrupt Principles. Human Reaſon having got a Bruiſe in the Fall, is weak even in its own Sphere; with how much toil doth it creep from Letters to Words, and from Words to Arts and Sciences, and when it is there, how little doth it know? Can it explain the Nature of Attraction, unriddle a Load-ſtone, or draw out an occult Quality to open View, and ſtrip the meaneſt Creature of the inveſting Accidents, and look upon the naked Eſſence thereof? And ſhall ſuch a Weakling as this, dunced in every Atom, within its own Sphere, pretend to determine in, or rule over ſacred Myſteries, which come out of the Boſom of God by Divine Revelation, to be the Eternal Wonder of Angels and Men?

It is own'd, That Reaſon, or rational Arguments are of great Uſe for ſtopping the Mouths of Gainſayers, and that they are ſufficient to beget a moral Certainty of the Divine Original of the Scriptures. But Divine Faith, in the Nature of the Thing, is an Aſſent upon the Teſtimony of God himſelf ſpeaking in his Word, which layeth a Foundation for the moſt certain Knowlege, and higheſt Evidence of the Truth of what is thus revealed. For it is as evident and certain, that what God ſaith is true, as that the whole is greater than its Part. And the Scriptures ſufficiently ſhew themſelves to be the Word of

God, by their own innate Evidence and the Illumination of the ſame Holy Spirit, which endited them (*a*). The Genius of a celebrated Author appears evident to the judicious in his Stile and manner of Writing. The skill of an ingenious Architect, or an accompliſhed Limner diſtinguiſh their Performances from all others of the Kind. And every Man upon all occaſions ſatisfies his Neighbour, without any chain of moral Arguments, that it is he himſelf that converſeth with him, and not another Man. And ſhall we imagine, that the great God has not engraven ſuch Signatures of his Authority, Wiſdom, Holineſs, Merey and Faithfulneſs upon his own Word, as do ſufficiently diſtinguiſh it from all other Writings whatſoever, and clearly evidence to all who are not under the Power of their natural Blindneſs and unbelief, that it is the Word of God and not of Man? And if Infidels and Unbelievers are ſenſible of no ſuch Evidence, doth it any more diſprove what is advanced, than blind Men their not ſeeing the Light, will prove, that there is neither Light nor Sight among Men?

The Apoſtles of Chriſt, who were employ'd to convert the World, made no uſe of theſe moral Arguments, which ſome at this Day would ultimately reſolve our Faith into

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(*a*) *Vid.* Harm. *Confeſs.* P. 12, 13. & P. 10. *ibid. Confeſ. Chap.* 1. *Par.* 5. Calvin *Inſtit. Lib.* 1. *Cap.* 7. §. 4, 5. Whittaker. *contrav. de ſcript. queſt.* 3. *cap.* 1 *Page* 286.

into. For we are assured by the Apostle *Paul*, That their Speech and their Preaching was not with enticing Words of Man's Wisdom, but in Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power, and that on purpose that the Faith of their Hearers should not stand in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of God. And many illiterate Persons have in all Ages believed the Scriptures, to the saving of their Souls, who were never able to understand the Force of these Arguments. The Prophets of old delivered their Message to the People of God, giving no other Reason for it, but, *thus saith the Lord*; and God himself did remit his ancient People, to the Evidence his Word did give by its own Light and Power, as sufficient to distinguish it from all Impostures, *Ezek.* xxiii. 26, --- 29. *The Prophet that hath a Dream, let him tell a Dream, and he that hath my Word, let him speak my Word faithfully; what is the Chaff to the Wheat, saith the Lord? Is not my Word like a Fire, saith the Lord, and like a Hammer that breaketh the Mountains in Pieces?* In like Manner our Lord Jesus hath taught us clearly in the Parable of the rich Man, That if Men are not affected by the Evidence of the Word it self, they would give no Credit to a Messenger from the Dead, nor be convinced by the most evident Miracles, or astonishing Prodigies. 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. Luke xvi. 27, 31.

4. We are also taught in the holy Scriptures, That the Gospel alone is the Word of Reconciliation; and that human Reason cannot learn from the Works of Creation and

Providence, that God is reconcilable to Sinners, and that there is a Remedy provided for Sin.

It is not pretended, That they could have revealed this to Man in his Primitive State, and how can they do it now, ſeeing they are ſtill the ſame in themſelves? We are ſure, that they revealed no ſuch Thing to *Adam* after the Fall, for he fled from the Preſence of God to hide himſelf in the Thickets of Paradiſe. They manifeſt the Power of the Creator, and the Wiſdom of the Governour of the Univerſe, *his eternal Power and Godhead*, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it. But they cannot reveal the Purpoſes of his Grace, and the free Acts of his Will; and of this Kind is his Reconcilableneſs to Sinners. Natural Conſcience, and the Law, with the inbred Notions in the Mind of Man, about God's Holineſs and vindictive Juſtice *, do all pronounce Wrath againſt the Sinner; but know nothing of Pardon and Reconciliation, which is revealed only by the Goſpel, by which alone Men are called to Repentance.

Rom. ii. 14, 15. Gal. iii. 10. Rom. i. 32. Act. xvii. 30.

Neither did Tradition, together with the Works of Nature, reveal God's Reconcileableneſs to the Heathen, and that a Remedy was provided. For, we are aſſured, that the World, by all the Advantages they enjoy'd that way, knew not God, and that therefore it was neceſſary to publiſh the Goſpel unto them, as the only Means of their Salvation.

1 Cor. i. 21 & 25.

And

* See Dr. *Owen* on *Pſal.* 130. *v.* 4.

And that, when it was revealed, they were ſo far from underſtanding its ſpiritual Myſteries, by their natural Powers and Abilities, that they rejected it as Fooliſhneſs, and not agreeable to their carnal Reaſonings. Was it poſſible, that by their natural Abilities, in the Uſe of the Means that they had, they could know that a Remedy was provided for Sin, and yet reproach it with Folly, when it was clearly revealed to them by the Goſpel? And could they have any true Knowledge of the inexorable Juſtice and infinite Holineſs of God, and yet deſpiſe the only way of reconciling their different Intereſts in the Croſs of Chriſt? And if they only imagined, that God paſſed as lightly over their Sins, as they did themſelves, and that he might be appeas'd by their Victims and Sacrifices, this would not ſay, that they knew God was reconcilable to Sinners, but that they were groſly ignorant both of God and of themſelves. *Paul* tells us, that the *Athenians*, notwithſtanding all their Study of Nature, and Knowledge in Tradition, were ignorant Worſhippers of the unknown God. And our Saviour aſſures us, That the *Samaritans*, who lived in the Neighbourhood of *Judea*; and might therefore have known as much by Tradition as any other People, that yet *they worſhipped they knew not what*; and ſhall we believe, that ſuch as remain'd groſly ignorant of the Nature of God, were able to know his Reconcileableneſs to Sinners?

1 Cor. xii. 14.

Acts xvii. 23. John iv. 22.

Let any ſober Man but conſider the extravagant Fancies of *Thales* and *Democritus*, as

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to the Origin of all Things, and of *Ariſtotle* about the Eternity of the World; of *Epicurus*, and the *Stoicks*, about Divine Providence; and reflect upon the *Obſcenities* and *Inhumanities*, in the Laws of *Lycurgus*, ſo much fam'd among the *Lacedemonians:* And he cannot but be convinced that theſe Philoſophers were groſly ignorant of the eſſential Perfections of God; and if ſo, how could they themſelves, or the more unthinking Part of Mankind among them, come to know from all the Means that they had, that God was reconcileable to Sinners, and that there was a Remedy provided for Sin? Let Men therefore, as *Bernard* ſaith, beware of going about to make *Plato* and other *Pagan* Philoſophers, Chriſtians, leaſt thereby they prove themſelves to be Heathens (*a*).

I ſhall only further remark, that Divine Revelation was neceſſary to Men in a lapſed State, for other Ends, than to teach them the Extent of the Law of Nature, and to inform them of the neceſſary Motives of their Obedience (*b*). For it has been made evident by the Defenders of revealed Religion, that beſides the neceſſary Motives of Obedience, many other Things were hid from the moſt attentive among the Heathen, ſuch as the Origin of Sin, and of that Corruption of Nature, which every Man cannot but feel in himſelf, and obſerve in others; the Method of ex-

(*a*) *Bernard.* Epiſt. 190. *Weſt.* Conf. Ch. 10. § 4.
(*b*) See Mr. *Campbel* Treatiſe of Enthuſiaſm.

expiating our Guilt, and ſatisfying the Juſtice of God, without which the Pardon of Sin was not ſo much as poſſible; and the Means and Manner of worſhipping God acceptably (*c*). And it is certain, that to find out a way to exerciſe Mercy upon Sinners without the Violation of Juſtice, and to make the Pardon of Sinners conſiſtent with the Holineſs of God's Nature, the Honour of his Laws, and his Hatred of Sin; was the Product of the Love, Mercy, and manifold Wiſdom of God, and a Myſtery which Angels look into with Wonder and Praiſe. This is what the Moral Law could never poſſibly reveal, tho' it commands us to aſſent to it, when revealed by the Goſpel. And the Obſervation of the Moral Law alone, was not ſufficient to entail real and laſting Felicity upon Man in his primitive Eſtate, without a due regard to the poſitive Law his Creator preſcrib'd to him (*d*).

We

(*c*) See Mr. *Halyburton* againſt Deiſm, and Dr. *Clark* his Diſcourſe of natural and revealed Religion. (*d*) See a Diſcourſe concerning the prevailing Evils of the preſent Times, wherein ſome ſolid Remarks are made upon Mr. C———'s Pamphlet. I ſhall only obſerve, That there is one Principle he takes for granted, and which ſeems to be the main Hinge of his whole Reaſoning in that Performance, *viz.* That no Man can poſſibly become an Enthuſiaſt of a ſudden. Now whether Enthuſiaſm be conſidered, as the Effect of pure Mechaniſm, or of the Influence of a diabolical Spirit, I ſuppoſe, it may poſſibly employ all Mr. C———'s Skill in the animal Oeconomy, and in the Nature and Operations of Spirits to prove it, that a Man may not be-

5. We are likewiſe taught in the ſacred Writings, That Men in a lapſed State, have loſt all Ability and Power, to what is good, (e) and that there is no eſtabliſhed Connection by divine Promiſe, betwixt the Works of the natural Man, and ſaving Grace.

The Salvation of Sinners is accompliſhed in a Way wherein God alone is honoured, Grace exalted, the Creature depreſs'd, and all Boaſting excluded. But Men would have whereof to glory, if they had natural Powers and Abilities to what is ſpiritually good, and by their own Improvement of them, made themſelves to differ from others.

The Apoſtle *Paul* aſſures us, That Men in a natural State, *are dead in ſins*; that they are at *enmity with God*; and that they *know not the things of the Spirit of God*. And, can it be ſuppos'd, That Men dead and impotent in their Powers, at Enmity with God the Fountain of Grace in their Hearts, and ignorant of their own Wants, and of Chriſt in whom God's Purpoſes of Grace do center and meet; are notwithſtanding able to ſeek ſaving Grace, with Sincerity, and Faith of being heard, and that without Hypocriſy, Formality, or Deceit in ſuch Addreſſes to God? The

Eph. 2. 1. Rom. 8. 7. 1 Cor. 2. 14.

become an Enthuſiaſt in a few Days, as well as in the Courſe of ſome Years. But tho' the Subject he treats can be confirmed from moſt ſolid Topicks, yet, till he make good, what is above obſerved, the Argument will not conclude in the Manner he has laid it, with that Evidence could be wiſhed, in a Subject ſo weighty and important. (e) Weſt. Conf. Ch. 9. § 3.

The ſame Apoſtle deſcribes the State of Men before Converſion in the moſt moving Terms, *There is none righteous, no not one, there is none that underſtandeth, there is none that ſeeketh after God. There is none that doth good, no not one.* And he tells us, That to be a Sinner, and to be without Strength or Power to do Good, go inſeparably together. And that we are not ſufficient by our own Abilities, ſo much as to conceive a good Thought in our Minds; and that the People of God owe all the Good they do, and their very Powers and Abilities to the Grace of God, *who worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.* In like manner, our Lord Jeſus hath taught us, *That without him,* or ſeparate from him, *we can do nothing.* And his Followers, upon all Occaſions, profeſs their own Weakneſs, and utter Inſufficiency to every thing ſpiritually Good, and their humble Confidence in his promiſed Grace and Strength alone, for enabling them to perform every commanded Duty. But, to deſire ſaving Grace with Sincerity, and to ſeek it with Faith of being heard, without either Formality or Deceit, ſuppoſeth and implyeth ſome ſpiritual Emotions of Soul after God, the Fountain of all Grace, and ſome Kind of Approbation of the Method of Grace, and its Conveyance through a crucified Chriſt; all which are certainly good in themſelves, and cannot be exerted, without ſome ſupernatural Abilities and Powers.

Rom. 3. 11, 12.

Rom. 5. 6, 8.

2 Cor. 3. 5.

1 Cor. 15. 10.

John 15.

I ſhall add further, that it is plain God hath inſtituted Means, and that he ordinar-

ly worketh Grace in the Heart in the Uſe of them. And this is ſufficient to give Men a probable Ground of Hope, that they may be bleſſed to them, as well as to others, and to encourage them to attend upon a Sovereign God, in the Means of his own Appointment.

6. We are taught in the holy Scriptures, That all Men are bound to make the Glory of God their chief End, tho' yet they are called herewith to purſue Happineſs in the Enjoyment of him.

Rom. 11. 30. 1 Cor. 10. 31. 2 Cor. 5. 15.

The Apoſtle *Paul* confirms this Doctrine from that plain Topick, That God is the firſt Cauſe; and therefore he is the ultimate End of all Things. And he enjoyns it as a neceſſary Duty, to direct all our Actions to his Glory, as our higheſt End; which he enforceth from the ſtrongeſt Argument, Chriſt's dying for his People, that they ſhould live, not to themſelves, but to himſelf and his Glory, as their higheſt End, who died for them, and roſe again. It is certain that *Adam* no ſooner received his Being, but he was obliged to love and obey his Creator, tho' no Promiſe of future Happineſs had been made unto him. And as God made all Things for himſelf, and wiſely directs the inferior Creatures to anſwer the End of his Glory; ſo it is the diſtinguiſhing Character of reaſonable Creatures, acting as ſuch, of Council and Deſign to promote the ſame noble End, with the Author of their Being, and to chuſe that which is beſt in itſelf, as their higheſt and ultimate End. And

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it ſeems plainly to be the ſame Abſurdity, to make a Creature it ſelf the End of its Actions, as to make its own Will the Rule of its Life.

The Apoſtle *Paul* condemns thoſe who did ſervice to them, which by Nature are not Gods; intimating, that religious Worſhip is primarily founded upon the infinite Excellencies of God, and what he is in himſelf. And both *Moſes* and the Prophets teach us the ſame Thing Wherefore a prevailling Reſpect to the Glory of God, in celebrating his ſupereminent Excellencies is the chief Motive of religious Worſhip. And this doth manifeſtly eſtabliſh the Subject in Hand. (*d*)

Gal. 4. 8. Exod. 20. 2. Jer. 10. 6, 7.

God has made Man capable of enjoying himſelf, and at his Creation, condeſcended to encourage his Obedience by a Promiſe of Happineſs, which is renewed through Chriſt in the Goſpel Covenant. It is therefore no part of the Chriſtian Scheme, that Men are to be denied to their own Happineſs, and willing to forgo it. What we learn from the Holy Scripture, is, that we are to love God in a ſupreme Manner, and that we are to

(*d*) *Quando objectum religioſi cultus aſſigno ens ſufficientiſſimum, pariter ejuſdem judico fundamentum; quod ab abſoluta ſufficientia omnes omnino involvens perfectiones.* D'Vries *Exercit. rat. p.* 107. *Præclare ipſe Epicurus apud Ciceronem, Tam eximiam eſſe ait, & præſtantem naturam Deorum* (Dei) *ut ea debeat ipſa per ſe, ad* [illegible] *colendum allicere ſapientem.*

love him chiefly for himſelf, (*f*) and not merely or chiefly for the Proſpect of our own Happineſs. And this is the very Sum of the Moral Law itſelf. The ever bleſſed God could love nothing above himſelf, and his own Glory, becauſe there was nothing good or great, and truly lovely beſides himſelf. It therefore flows from his own infinite Perfection, that he loves himſelf in a ſupreme Manner, and it is his peculiar Glory to do ſo. Upon the other Hand for a finite Creature, to be acted by a Principle of ſelf-Love, that is to love nothing above itſelf, and what relates to itſelf, argues the greateſt Imperfection and Depravation of Nature. For, it is to ſay, that there is nothing greater or better than itſelf, and what relates to itſelf, than which nothing can be more blaſphemous; or that a rational Creature acting as ſuch, may prefer a leſſer Good to a greater, than which nothing can be more abſurd. And ſo true is it, that Self-love was the firſt Spring of Man's Apoſtacy from God; that his firſt Advances in returning to God are made by Self-

(*f*) We muſt firſt conceive the Object lovely and excellent in it ſelf, before we can wiſh it kind and loving to us. Let us conſider how much we are in Love with [illegible]*o*, *Scipio*, *&c.* upon the bare Knowledge of their Virtues, altho' from them we derive no perſonal Advantage. Since there we pay ſo much diſintereſted Love, to ſome few faint and unrefined Vertues, that never did profit us, how much on ſuch a Score and at that Rate, ſhould we love him, who ſo poſſeſſes all Perfection, that each of his Perfections is infinite? *Mr.* Boyle *in his Diſcourſe of Seraphick Love.*

Self-denial. If Self-love is acknowledged to be a leading Principle among dependent Beings, then it will follow, that there is ſuch an unintelligible Thing as a Creature made by God, and yet not for God and his Glory, but for itſelf, and its own private Intereſt; that the Creature is its own ultimate Happineſs, as well as its ultimate End; ſeeing no created Being, in a Courſe of Action, can arrive at a greater Happineſs, than to attain the ultimate End of all its Actions. And to love God chiefly as good to us, is to love him chiefly for our ſelves, and ſo to love ourſelves more than God; than which nothing can be more impious and contradictory to the Principles of Religion, whether natural or revealed.

In *fine*, A prevailing reſpect to the Glory of God, did moſt conſpicuouſly appear in the whole Courſe of our Redeemer's Obedience; who herein has left us an Example, that we ſhould follow his Steps. It is a bold and daring Reflection upon our glorious *Emmanuel*, to ſay, that he neither did, nor could prefer God's Glory, to his own greateſt Happineſs, his reigning glorioufly at God's right Hand. And that a Reſpect to this his own Happineſs, was the higheſt Principle, which moved him to undertake and undergo his Sufferings. We know, that *for the Joy ſet before him, he endured the Croſs.* But this did not mainly include the Exaltation of his humane Nature, but the Glory of God manifeſted in the Salvation of the Church, and in the Accompliſhment of all the

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Counſels of God (*g*). It is certain that the Glory of God was the high and noble End, deſign'd to be attained by the Obedience and Death of the Son of God. And will any adventure to ſay, that the only wiſe God our Saviour, had not the higheſt Reſpect to the higheſt and moſt noble End? No, we may aſſert it, that this is the Characteriſtick of fallen Angels and apoſtate Men, that remain in the Ruins of their natural State. Our Lord himſelf declares, that it was, becauſe the Holineſs, Mercy, Juſtice and Faithfulneſs of God, could not be otherwiſe illuſtrated in the Salvation of Sinners, than by the Interpoſition of a Divine Perſon, that he voluntarily acquieſced in the Will of the Father, to aſſume our Nature and to give his Life a Ranſom for many. The Son of God, as ſuch, can receive no Addition to his Glory, becauſe it is infinite; and it was as the Son of God, that, from Eternity he undertook to become the Son of Man, and to ſuffer in our Nature. And the greateſt Dignity and Glory, the humane Nature is advanced to, doth conſiſt in and flow from its intimate Union with the divine Perſon of the Son. And there being in the Nature of Things an infinite Diſtance betwixt finite and infinite, it is plain to a Demonſtration, that the great God our Saviour, had never condeſcended to this hypoſtatical Union, upon any Motive whatſoever, inferior to that of the Manifeſtation

Pſal. 40. 7. Heb 10. 6, 7.

(*g*) Vide Dr. *Owen* on the Place.

feſtation of the Glory of God, and of all the ſhining Excellencies of the Divine Nature, in his undertaking Death and Mediation.

And the ſame high Motive which moved our Lord Jeſus to undertake, influenced him to undergo his Sufferings. For, beſides that it is abſurd to imagine, that he undertook to ſuffer from one leading Principle, and underwent his Sufferings from another, we find him declaring in expreſs Terms, that he ſought not his own Glory, as his higheſt End: And ſpeaking of it, in a very triumphant Manner, as the moſt ſignal Fruit of his whole Miniſtry upon Earth, and of his approaching Death, (*John* xvii. 4.) ***Father I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finiſhed the Work which thou gaveſt me do.***

John 8. 50. John 5. 34. John 5. 30.

And further, it has been ſhown, That genuine Love to God is ingrafted upon this very Principle, of a prevailing Reſpect to the Glory of God; and none can doubt, that our Saviour's Love to his Father was moſt genuine and perfect. It has likewiſe been made appear, that a Reſpect to the Glory of God, in celebrating his ſuper eminent Excellencies, is the chief Motive of religious Worſhip, and nothing is more certain than that our Lord Jeſus in his humane Nature, performed the moſt perfect Worſhip to God, by which he was inconceivably more glorified, than by the Obedience and Adoration of all the Hoſts of Angels, ſince ever the World began. All which make it very manifeſt, that our Lord Jeſus, in undertaking and undergoing his Sufferings, and in the whole Courſe of his

his Obedience, was mainly acted from a Reſpect to the Glory of God. And in the laſt of theſe, he has left us a Pattern, to be followed by us with Veneration, in the whole of our Chriſtian Courſe.

I cannot, but upon this Occaſion obſerve, that they have done but ſmall Service to Mankind, who have laid the Foundation of moral Virtue (*a*), in an inordinate Self-love, a Vice condemned both by natural and revealed Religion! It were a laudable Deſign, no doubt, to promote Religion and Virtue among Men, Holineſs being abſolutely neceſſary to our Happineſs, both in a preſent and future State. But why ſhould not we found it, upon its own proper Baſis and Foundation, laid open to every Capacity in the Scriptures of Truth? For, if Morality is not ingrafted upon the Principles of the Goſpel, if it do not proceed from a regenerating Work of the Holy Spirit, and from a ſupreme Love to God, and a Reſpect to his Authority and Will, made known to us by his Law; and if it is not animated by daily Influences from Chriſt, the Head of his Body the Church; it is not Goſpel Holineſs, nay nor any Thing elſe but a wild *Chimæra*, that exiſts no where but in ſome verboſe and airy Harangues upon theſe Subjects. And ſo imaginary is this Superſtructure, and no Wonder it be ſuch, among thoſe who have the Benefit of Divine Revelation, that the Builders are not agreed among themſelves about the Foundation, ſome founding the whole in a pub-

(*a*) Mr. *Campbell's* Inquiry into Moral Virtue.

publick Good (*b*), and others in Self-love and private Intereſt.

We are likewiſe taught in the Holy Scriptures, that Chriſtian Congregations have a Right to elect their own Paſtors and Overſeers.

Their Right in this, appears from the Election of *Matthias Acts* 1. who, tho' he was to bear an extraordinary Character, yet, as he was to be an Officer in the Church of Chriſt, he had the Choice and Conſent of the Church, that his Election might be a Precedent in future Ages: It is true, they did not nominate the individual Perſon, but this was, not becauſe they were not the Source of Election, but becauſe God's immediate Determination of one of the Two they had choſen, was neceſſary to conſtitute the Character of an Apoſtle, whoſe Call to that Office behoved to be ſome Way immediate.

And Chriſtian Congregations, by Apoſtolical Practice, have Right to chuſe their Deacons, the Diſtributers of their Charity, becauſe of their Intereſt therein; and therefore they ought much more, to enjoy this Privilege in the Choice of their Paſtors, unto whom they commit the Inſpection and Care of their Souls. It is long ſince *Bellarmine* objected, that this Argument doth not conclude, becauſe greater Knowledge is required to judge of the Qualifications of Paſtors, than of Deacons. But we find from the Context, that they were to *look out for Men, that were of honeſt Report, full of the Holy Ghoſt, and of Wiſdom*; and theſe are main Branches of the Scripture Character of Acts 6.

(*b*) *Shaftsbury*'s Character ſtricks.

Paſtors. And ſeeing the Church of Chriſt, are theſe, to whom the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven are revealed, when they are hid from the wiſe and prudent, they may be ſuppoſed in ſome Meaſure qualified, to chuſe thoſe who are to diſpenſe theſe Myſteries among them. And if they happen to fall into Miſtakes, they may be remedied by the Presbytery, who have a Right to try and to judge of the Qualifications of the Candidates for that ſacred Office, and in whom alone the Power of Ordination reſides. And it is plain, that the Right of Election, naturally reſides in them that have the greateſt Intereſt in the Perſon choſen. One *Diogenes* perhaps had more Skill to chuſe fit Magiſtrates, than all the *Athenians*, yet the Right of Election was not in him, but in the *Athenians* themſelves, becauſe of their common Intereſt in their Governors. And our Lord tells us, *That his People know his Voice, and follow him*, and commands them to *try the Spirits whether they are of God*; and to *beware of falſe Prophets*. All which ſuppoſe, that he hath furniſhed his Church, with neceſſary Abilities to chooſe ſuch as are to be ſet over them in the Lord.

And farther, this Principle is confirmed from the Practice of the Apoſtles *Paul* and *Barnabas*, their ordaining Presbyters by the Suffrages of the Churches, over which they ſet them. *Acts* xiv. 23†. The Word χειροτονησαντες had

† *Beza* renders the Text, *Quumq; ipſis per ſuffragia creaſſent per ſingulas Eccleſias Presbyteros.* And ſo *Pagnius*

had its Rife from the ancient Cuſtom of the *Grecians*, who in their Election of Magiſtrates uſed to give their Suffrages by ſtretching out their Hands. *Aneſius* ſays, That *Bellarmine* himſelf owns, that this of electing by Suffrages is the only proper and native Signification of the Word (*a*). It is true, notwithſtanding of this Conceſſion, he would have χειροτονια to be put for χειροθησια. But a judicious Proteſtant anſwers (*b*), That if this had been the Caſe, the Evangeliſt had been a Barbarian to theſe he wrote unto; for at that Time the Word was not ſo uſed in any Author, whether ſacred or profane.

It is manifeſt, that this was the received Principle of the Chriſtian Church, in its firſt and pureſt Ages (*c*); and of this Church both in ancient and later Times. From the Year 205, when this Nation firſt profeſſed the Chriſtian Faith, till the Time of *Palladius*, our Paſtors were choſen out of the Monks and Culdees by the Suffrages of the People (*d*). And this was manifeſtly the Principle of our Reformers (*e*), and of *Calvin* (*f*), and other

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Pagnius, *Vatablus*, *Eraſmus*, and others render the Word. And Doctor *Hill* tells us, That this Text, among others, was corrupted by the Reviſers of our *Engliſh* Tranſlation.

(*a*) Bellarm. Enerv. p. 97. (*b*) Mr. Bowles.

(*c*) See Sir *Peter King* his Enquiry into the Conſtitution of the primitive Church.

(*d*) *Boethius* Lib. 7. c. 128. Sir *James Dalrymple*, Col. p. 111, 133.

(*e*) See *Buchan.* Lib. 16.

(*f*) Inſt. Chriſt. Rel. lib. 4. c. 5. § 2. & c. 3. § 15.

great Men in the reformed Churches abroad. This Church has declared her Sentiments for the Right of Chriſtian Congregations in this Particular, in her Books of Diſcipline, and Acts of Aſſembly (*a*); and ſo have other reformed Churches in their Confeſſions and Canons of Diſcipline (*b*).

From all which it is very manifeſt, that it is altogether unlawful and unwarrantable in any Church, to deprive Chriſtian Congregations of that Power, to which they have both a Divine and natural Right, and to lodge it in Heritors as ſuch. And for the ſame Reaſons we muſt look upon Patronages as an heavy Grievance (*c*), and which of late is become more inſupportable than ever. And for this, we have not our moſt gracious and only rightful Sovereign K. *George* to blame: Nay not the Law itſelf ſo much as the Conduct of ſome of our own Judicatories inferior or more ſupreme. It were therefore to be wiſhed, that we would prudently improve the Advantages offered us by the Law in the mollifying Act 1719: And likewiſe make the beſt we can of the Right reſerved by the Patronage-act itſelf in Terms of the Act 1690, unto Chriſtian Congregations to aſſent to, or diſſent from the Perſon nominate by the Patron, and the Reaſons of Diſſent to be judged by the Presbytery

(*a*) See Acts of Aſſembly *December* 20. 1560, and Act of Aſſembly 1562 cited, *Account of Lay-patron, In Scotland*, p. 2. and Acts of Aſſembly 1638, 1649.
(*b*) See *Jus Populi Divinum*, &c. by Mr. *Curry*.
(*c*) See *Park* upon Patronages.

tery of the Bounds. And why ſhould we not in the moſt humble Manner repreſent this Grievance to our gracious Sovereign, who, as the Father of his People, will, no doubt, take Pleaſure in doing us Kindneſs, and in relieving ſuch a conſiderable Body of his Subjects, as is the Church of *Scotland*, moſt firmly attached to his Majeſty's Intereſt, and to the Proteſtant Succeſſion in his moſt illuſtrious Family; from what is moſt grievous and afflicting to her, and which if continued, muſt very ſoon iſſue in her utter Ruin and Deſolation?

II. We now proceed to ſhew what is imported in this Duty of contending earneſtly for the Faith. The Word in the firſt Language we obſerved is exceeding ſtrong, ſignifying to contend as in an Agony, or with the greateſt Intention of Mind. And our thus contending for the Faith,

1. Importeth, That the Doctrine of the Faith in Chriſt, is moſt precious and valuable in it ſelf. Hence we are commanded *to buy the Truth and not to ſell it* at any Price, as being a moſt invaluable Treaſure. Goſpel Truth is an Emanation from the Father of Lights, manifeſting the eſſential Perfections of the ſupreme Being in the cleareſt Manner, and unfolding the free Purpoſes of his Will, and the Miſteries of his Grace and Love. The Great God our Saviour aſſumed our Nature, that he might purchaſe the Bleſſings exhibited and conveyed by this Word of Truth, that he might bear witneſs to the Truth, and inſtruct us in it; And by the Miracles he wrought in his Life, and the Blood he pour'd out at his Death,

Death, he gave us the ſtrongeſt Confirmations of it. And the nobleſt End, the Glory of God in the Salvation of the Souls of Men, is advanced or impaired, as we retain it, or let it ſlip. For it is the great Mean of the Renovation and Sanctification of our Natures of Fellowſhip with God here in Duties and Ordinances, and to direct and prepare us for the full Enjoyment of him hereafter. And therefore the Defence of the Goſpel is not a trivial, but the moſt weighty and honourable Cauſe, we can poſſibly be engag'd into.

John xvii. 2 Cor. iii. 18. Rom. i. 16.

2. It importeth, That the Truth as it in Jeſus, hath had many Enemies in all Ages, who have endeavoured to bear it down, and to oppoſe ſuch as maintained it. Satan ſtirr'd up *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, and other Adverſaries, to oppoſe the Goſpel of Truth preached by the Apoſtle *Paul*, and we find him (*Act.* xx. 29.---) warning the Elders of *Epheſus* of their Danger that way. And the Apoſtle *John* penn'd his Goſpel, as for other Reaſons, ſo with a particular View, to confound the Errors of *Cerinthus* and the *Ebionites*, of the *Nicolaitans* and *Gnoſticks*, which even then began to ſpread in the Church. The Hereſie of *Ebion* and *Cerinthus*, ſubverting that great Truth of our Lord's Deity, was afterwards reviv'd by *Arius* and others. *Neſtorius* attack'd the Unity of his Perſon, and *Eutychus* the Diſtinction of his Natures. And *Noetus* with his Diſciple *Sabellius*, deny'd three diſtinct Perſons in the Godhead, and affirm'd they were but three Names. But as Inſtances of this Sort

Sort are innumerable, ſo we are aſſur'd that they made their firſt Advances by Fraud and Diſſimulation; our Apoſtle tells us, *they crept in unawares*; and it is well known, with what Violence and Perſecution they manag'd Matters, when it was in the Power of their Hands.

3. This earneſt Contention implieth ſome conſiderable Strength, whereby to maintain the Conflict, with ſuch powerful Adverſaries. Our Strength for this, as likewiſe for every Duty, conſiſteth in the Vigour of inward Grace, animated by daily Supplies from our exalted Head, Chriſt Jeſus. Such as the Knowledge, Faith and Love of the Truth, as it is in Jeſus, diſcovering themſelves in a Holy and Chriſtian Life. And this Strength we muſt exert and put forth, in enduring all Conflicts for the Cauſe of Truth, and in uſing all appointed Means for its Preſervation and Defence. And all this muſt be manag'd in a Dependence upon Chriſt for Strength and Sufficiency, for it is only, if we begin all in his Name, and proceed in his Help, that we may hope to end for his Praiſe. And this leads me to the *Third* general Head propos'd, namely to diſcourſe briefly of the Means, in the Uſe of which the Followers of Jeſus are obliged in their different Characters, to contend for this Faith of the Goſpel; And,

1. Chriſtian Magiſtrates in their Characters, are to maintain and defend the Faith in Chriſt. We do not mean, that they are to propagate the Religion of Jeſus, by Sword, Fire and Faggot. But that Chriſtian States are to em-

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ploy their Power and Authority, for ſupport of the Worſhip and Service of God, as well as for regulating our Behaviour to our Fellow-Creatures. Both Precepts and Examples under the Old Teſtament, are ſtrong and clear to this Purpoſe; and theſe were not temporary Laws, but founded upon perpetual and moral Grounds, ſuch as the Peace of Societies, the Good of Men's Souls; the Duty of all dependent Beings, to pay Homage to their Creator, in the Manner himſelf has preſcrib'd; and the Duty of all Magiſtrates, the Miniſters and Delegates of the great God, to vindicate and maintain his Honour among Men. Was it not a moral and binding Duty upon *Adam*, *Abel*, *Enoch*, and the ancient Patriarchs, Magiſtrates and Princes, in their numerous Families, to reſtrain their Children and Servants, from blaſpheming God, breaking his Sabbaths, and a prophane Neglect of his Worſhip, as well as from oppreſſing one another? *Job* tells us, that in his Time, Idolatry and Contempt of God was a Crime puniſhed by the Judges, no leſs than Injuries done to their Fellow-Creatures. (*Job* xxxi.) Now *Job* lived before the Days of *Moſes*, and therefore this Law, which was in Force in his Time, could not be borrowed from the Ceremonial or Judicial Law, but muſt be look'd upon as Moral in its Nature. And we find it foretold of Chriſtian Magiſtrates, that they ſhall protect the Church of Chriſt, as a Father his Children; which muſt imply, their taking Care of the Worſhip of the true God, and maintaining in their own Station, the

Truths

Truths of the Goſpel. For Heathen Governors take Care of what relates to humane Society, as well as Chriſtian Magiſtrates. And ſeeing they are to reſtrain Men, from doing Miſchief to one another, why not from Impiety againſt God, and Contempt of his Worſhip; without a regard to which, Peace and Honeſty can no more ſubſiſt among profeſſed Chriſtians, than a Building can ſtand without a Foundation? No doubt Magiſtrates have miſtaken Error for Truth, and made a bad Uſe of their Power upon many Occaſions. But, if the Abuſe of a Power take away the lawful Uſe of it, Mankind will be in a ſtrange and unheard of Situation! And it will be own'd, that private Perſons may miſtake Error for Truth, as well as Men in Authority, and yet they are enjoin'd by the Spirit of God, to receive none into their Houſes, who bring falſe Doctrine, (2 Ep. *Jo.* 10.) under the Pains of being Partakers of their evil Deeds. And may not the Chriſtian Magiſtrate by the ſame Rule, exclude Hereticks and Seducers from all Houſes within his Dominions? But I am not to enter upon this Argument, only I muſt add, that it ſeems to be a Principle chocking to common Underſtanding, that Chriſtian States muſt tolerate Blaſphemers and Seducers, to turn away their deareſt Friends and beſt Subjects from the Faith, to the Ruin of their Souls, without any Reſtraint, but by exhorting them to refrain from it. However, this is but a meer Amuſement, common to all that innovate in the Faith, by which they ſeem to

mean nothing more, but that their own Liberty is not to be abridg'd, whatever become of every Mans elſe. The *Arians* ſeemed to be great Friends to Toleration, and Patriots of Liberty; yet when they got Power in their Hands, they raiſed a more hot Perſecution againſt the Orthodox, than any of the *Pagan* Emperors did againſt the Chriſtians. *Athanaſius* deſcribes at large their more than beaſtly Cruelty, againſt all Sexes and Ages; and concludes, that he ſaid leſs than their Inhumanity deſerv'd, becauſe it exceeded all Expreſſions.

2. The Miniſters of Chriſt, are in an eſpecial Manner called upon, to maintain and defend the Purity of the Chriſtian Doctrine. They are placed by Chriſt in his Houſe for the Defence of the Goſpel; and were given to the Church, for this End, among others, that the Flock of Chriſt might not be toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine. And they are to maintain the Doctrine of the Faith in Chriſt,

Phil. i. 17. Eph. iv. 11, 14.

1. By preaching the Things which become ſound Doctrine, and taking Care to have their Hearers eſtabliſhed in the Truth as it is in Jeſus. And, according to the Apoſtle's Exhortation to the Elders of *Epheſus*, they are to watch themſelves, and give Warning to their People of the Attempts of Seducers, who creep in craftily, and ly in wait to deceive. And by ſound Doctrine they are to exhort and convince Gainſayers, refuting their perverſe Tenets from the Holy Scriptures, the only Foundation and Rule of our Faith.

Tit. ii. 1. 1 Theſ. iii. 2. Acts xx. 29, 30, 31. Tit. i. 9.

2. It

2. It likewiſe belongs to Goſpel-miniſters aſſembled in Synods, in the Name of Chriſt, the only Head of the Church, to determine Articles of Faith from the Holy Scriptures, and to condemn the Errors which are ſpreading in their own Times.

This is confirm'd from the Example of the firſt Synod, which met at *Jeruſalem* in the Days of the Apoſtles, the Decrees of which were delivered to, and received by all the Churches. And their Determinations founded on the Scriptures, are to be Standards and Teſts of Soundneſs in the Faith, to which they are to take all engaged, whom they admit to miniſterial Communion. The Apoſtle *Paul* tells us, that it is the Duty of Miniſters to hold faſt the Form of ſound (*a*) Words, which plainly ſuppoſeth, that a Form or Summary of the Chriſtian Faith, may warrantably be drawn up and compoſed; and none can better undertake this Work than the Miniſters of Chriſt aſſembled for that End, and acting in the manner he has preſcribed in his Word. And further, according to the Apoſtle's Direction, none are to be ordained to the Miniſtry, but ſuch as are faithful Men (*b*), who hold faſt the faithful Word, and are found in the Faith; and this cannot be obſerved without ſome Standard, by which their Soundneſs

Acts xv.

2 Tim. i. 13.

2 Tim. ii. 2. Tit. i. 9.

(*a*) *Vid. Leigh critic. ſacr.* (*b*) πιστοις ἀνθρωποις. *Quotiescunque pro homine Chriſtiano vocabulum* πιστος *uſurpari occurrit—toties neceſſe eſt fateamur, eum denotare, qui credit, aut fidem adhibet Deo, ut Joh.* 20. 27. Fuller. miſcel. L. 1. *c.* 19.

is to be tried. No doubt the Scriptures themſelves, are the only Foundation and Rule of Faith, and if all that profeſſed a Regard to them, underſtood them in the ſame Senſe, there were no Occaſion for any other Teſt of Orthodoxy. But this was not the Caſe in the very Days of the Apoſtles, and far leſs can it be expected now. We find (*Acts* viii.) that before *Philip* admitted his young Convert, ſo much as to Chriſtian Communion, he required of him a Confeſſion of his Faith; and it was not ſufficient for him to ſay, that he believed the Old Teſtament, the only Canon of Scripture then extant, to be the Word of God; this was acknowledged by the Prieſts, and all the Jews, who notwithſtanding crucified the Lord of Glory; but he profeſſes his Faith as to the Senſe and Meaning of the Scriptures, that the ancient Propheſies, Types and Promiſes, were all now accompliſhed in Jeſus of *Nazareth*; that he was Jeſus a Saviour from Sin and its direful Effects; that as to Office he was the Meſſiah, and as to his Perſon he was the Son of the Father, by an eternal, neceſſary, and ineffable Generation. I ſhall only further obſerve, That by the foreſaid apoſtolical Directory, none were to be admitted to the inferior Office of Deacons, but ſuch as

1 Tim. iii. 9. *held the Myſtery of the Faith in a pure Conſcience.* And this confirmeth our Argument as to Miniſters, who bear a ſuperior Character in the Church. From all which it appears, that Goſpel Miniſters are enjoined by their Lord and Maſter, to admit none to bear Office in his Houſe, but ſuch as give all neceſ-

ſary

ſary Satisfaction, as to the Soundneſs of their Faith; which cannot poſſibly be done without ſome Teſt or Standard for that Purpoſe. *Rufinus* (*c*) and ſome of the Ancients have advanced, that the Apoſtles made a Creed before they ſeparated. But whatever be of this, it is certain that the Council of *Nice* and others upon the like Occaſions, found it neceſſary to compoſe Confeſſions of their Faith, and to exclude ſuch from Miniſterial Communion, who refus'd to ſubſcribe and acknowledge them. And this Conduct cannot be loaded with impoſing new Terms of Communion, ſeeing, as has been ſhown, it is warranted from the Holy Scriptures. And no Man's Right can poſſibly be invaded, nor the Liberty of his Conſcience be infring'd, by hindering him to preach the Faith which he doth not believe, or from venting pernicious Principles to his own Condemnation, and the Ruin of others. For no Man can poſſibly have any better Right to reproach the Author of his Being, and ſeduce his Fellow-creatures from the Truth as it is in Jeſus, in which their Life and eternal Felicity is wrapt up, than he can have a Right to defame, oppreſs, or murder his Neighbour. We know that Councils have err'd; and ſo have civil Magiſtrates in laying down Rules for human Society, the *Spartans* permitted their Youth to Steal, and other States have eſtabliſhed Iniquity by a Law. And is it therefore fit, that we

John xvii. 3.

(*c*) *Dupin. compend. hiſtor. V.* 1. *p.* 356.

we have no Laws as to ſocial Life, till we get infallible Legiſlators? And tho' Church-judicatories are fallible, yet the Holy Scriptures upon which they are to proceed, are an infallible Rule, both perfect and plain in all Things neceſſary to Salvation. And if they are ſingle in their Aims, humble and ſelf-denied in their Conduct, they may lay Claim to the infallible Promiſe of the Holy Spirit of God, to lead them into all Truth, and to guard them againſt dangerous Miſtakes. And this, we think, is ſufficient to animate and encourage Chriſt's Servants to do their Duty; and to oblige all to pay a due Regard to their juſt Power and Authority.

3. Miniſters of the Goſpel met in Church-judicatories, are likewiſe to inflict Cenſures, upon Seducers and falſe Teachers. The Scripture is plain as to this, *Tit.* iii. 10. *An Heretick, after the firſt and ſecond Admonition, reject.* And *Gal.* i. 9. *If any Man preach any other Goſpel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accurſed.* According to this Rule the Apoſtle *Paul* delivered *Hymeneus* and *Alexander* to Satan, that they might learn not to blaſpheme. And we find that the Church of *Pergamos* is blam'd for tolerating them, that held the Doctrine of *Balaam* and of the *Nicolaitans*, and *Thyatira* is condemn'd for ſuffering *Jezebel* to teach. Whereas *Epheſus* is commended for her Zeal in cenſuring and ſuppreſſing falſe Teachers. From all which it is manifeſt, That Church-judcatories ought to inflict Cenſures upon falſe Teachers adequate to the Crimes which have been found proven a-

againſt them: And that in order to bring them to a deep and ſerious Exerciſe of Repentance for their Sin and Impiety, to ſhew the Church's Abhorence of the Errors they have vented, to vindicate Truth and the Honour of God, and to brand Error with Infamy *in terrorem* to others.

I ſhall only add further, that Miniſters in their Character are Witneſſes to the Truth, (*Acts* xxvi. 16, 22.) And therefore when the Truths of God are ſubverted, they are to ſupport them by the Word of their Teſtimony, whatever Sufferings they may be expos'd to upon that account. *John* the Beloved Diſciple was baniſhed to the Iſle *Patmos* for the Teſtimony of Jeſus, *Rev.* i. where he had the moſt refreſhing Fellowſhip with God, and was made moſt uſeful to the Church in After-ages, both by his Writings and Sufferings there. But,

3. All the Saints, all private Chriſtians, are to defend the Faith, in the Uſe of ſome Means, in common with thoſe that are in Power and Authority. And,

1. According to the Apoſtle *Paul* his Direction to the *Philippians*, chap. i. 27. they are to *ſtrive together for the Faith of the Goſpel*, by leading holy Lives, and maintaining a *Converſation ſuitable to the Goſpel of Chriſt*. And the ſame Apoſtle aſſures us, that if *theſe who have believed in God are* not *careful to maintain good Works*, their Knowledge of Chriſt is but *barren and unfruitful*, than which nothing can be a greater Reproach to their Profeſſion, nor an higher Indignity done the Tit. 3. 8, 14.

Lord

the Lord Jeſus, who came not *to deſtroy the Law, but to fulfil it.*

2. They are to pray for the Succeſs of the Faith againſt Error, that *the Word of the Lord may have free Courſe, and be glorified*; that for this End *God would ſend forth Labourers into his Harveſt*; and that when the Truths of God are attacked and ſubverted, *Utterance may be given to* the Miniſters of Chriſt to *ſpeak boldly as they ought to ſpeak.* Private Chriſtians who can thus prevail with God, ſhall be uſeful Inſtruments in *contending for the Faith* of Chriſt, which hath obtained greater Victories againſt Error by Prayer than Diſputation.

Eph. 6. 19.
Mat. 9. 38.
2 Theſ. 3. 1.

3. They are to confeſs the Truth, when called unto it. The Apoſtle *Paul* tells us, that it is not enough to *believe with the Heart*, but that likewiſe *with the Mouth* we muſt confeſs Chriſt and his Truth. This Confeſſion of him importeth in it a Profeſſion of him and his Goſpel, in the Face of Oppoſition and Enemies; and to this we are encouraged by the ſtrongeſt of Arguments; for our Lord ſaith, *Whoever ſhall confeſs me before Men, him will I confeſs alſo before my Father which is in Heaven.* On the other Hand, we are warned, that *if we deny him, he will alſo deny us.*

Rom. 10. 10.
Mat. 16. 31.
2 Tim. 2. 12.

4. By ſuffering for the Truth of the Goſpel. The Apoſtles rejoiced that they *were counted worthy to ſuffer Shame for the Name of Chriſt.* And *Paul* was *ready not only to be bound, but to die at Jeruſalem for the Name of Jeſus.* And the primitive Chriſtians *took joyfully the ſpoiling of their Goods*, and *loved not their Lives*

Acts 5. 41.
Acts 21. 31.
Heb. 10. 34.

unto

unto the Death. Church-history abounds with instructing Instances of the Faith, Resolution, and examplary Piety of Confessors and Martyrs in all Periods of the Church. I shall only upon this Occasion put you in Remembrance of the great and noble *Argyle*, the worthy *Warristoun*, and the eminent Mr. *Guthrie*, once a bright Light in this Place, from which I have the Honour, in the Name of Christ, to address you. Rev. 12. 11.

I shall now conclude this Discourse by exhorting all that *love our Lord Jesus in Sincerity*, in their different Characters, *to contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints.* And in particular, my Reverend Brethren and Fathers, let us who bear the honourable Character of the Ministers of Jesus, be encouraged in this necessary Duty, when we consider,

1. That our Lord has promised us his Holy Spirit *to lead us into all Truth*, John xvi. and to be with us, in the great Work he has called us to be employed into, and in all the Conflicts we may be engaged into for his Cause and Interest, *Matth.* xxviii. 20. and has pledged his Faithfulness, that *if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him*; and that if we *keep the Word of his Patience, he will keep us in the Hour of Temptation*; and in the Issue give us a Crown of Life, and the Possession of *a Kingdom that cannot be moved.*

2. Let us consider, that Errors and Heresies are most destructive and pernicious to the Souls of Men; *Paul* enumerates them among *the Works of the Flesh*, which exclude Men from the Kingdom of God; *Peter* calls them Gal. 5. 20, 21. 2 Pet. 2. 1.

damnable Hereſies, which entail upon the Promoters and Propagators of them *ſwift and eternal Perdition*; and *Jude* in the Context ſays of Seducers, that they *are wandring Stars, to whom is reſerved the Blackneſs of Darkneſs for ever.* They only delude themſelves who imagine (*a*), that Errors are not damnable, becauſe they are the Effect of a miſtaken Judgment, and not of a vicious Mind: For Error never yet lodged any where elſe, but in a vicious Mind; and *Paul*'s miſtaken Judgment did not make him innocent in reproaching the Son of God; he himſelf owns after his Converſion, that in ſo doing he was *injurious, a Blaſphemer*, and *the Chief of Sinners.* And certainly every Sin, and eſpecially this, which is here affirmed to be of the moſt heinous Nature, deſerveth eternal Damnation.

1 Tim. 1. 13, 15

3. Let us conſider, that of the Mercy of God, *the Day-ſpring from on high did viſit* this Land, in an early dawning of Goſpel Light (*b*); and that the Hand of God did moſt remarkably appear, in beginning and carrying on our glorious Reformation to as great a Pitch of Purity in Doctrine, Worſhip, Diſcipline and Government, as any reformed Church whatſoever. And let us farther reflect

(*a*) *Chubb*'s Tract of Perſecution.

(*b*) Our Hiſtorian *Buchanan* ſays, *Scoti ex Diſcipulis* Joannis *Apoſtoli, Chriſtianiſum edocti ſunt.* Lib. 5. And *Tertullian*, a Writer in the ſecond Century, ſays, *Evangelium fuit diffuſum in omnes orbis partes, etiam in Britanniam uſq; eamque Inſulæ partem, ad quam Romanæ vires nunquam penetrarunt.* Lib. contra Judeos.

reflect upon our miniſterial Vows and Engagements, and the inviolable Ties we are under, by our Covenants, National and ſolemn League, to maintain Purity of Doctrine, to promote Reformation in our reſpective Stations, and to walk cloſely with God. And that the Truths of God are a ſacred *Depoſitum*, 1 *Tim.* vi. 20. committed to our Truſt by our Lord and Maſter; and that they have been handed down to us by the Blood and Treaſure of the greateſt Saints, and moſt eminent Patriots for Religion and Liberty; and that therefore we muſt look upon ourſelves as obliged, in the moſt vigorous Manner, to preſerve them pure and intire, and to tranſmit them faithfully to Poſterity.

And that we may manage this Work the more ſucceſsfully, let us receive the Doctrine of Faith in *Chriſt* by a Divine Faith, founded upon the Authority and Veracity of God ſpeaking in his Word *(a)*. And let us contend for the Faith of the Goſpel with Meekneſs and Chriſtian Temper; and in a regular and orderly Manner, every Man, whether Magiſtrates, Miniſters, or private Perſons, acting that Part only, which God has preſcribed in his Word. Let us be ſingle in our Ends in all our Undertakings, eſpecially theſe of this kind, which are of the higheſt Conſequence to the Glory of God, the Peace of our Minds, and the Welfare of Poſterity; doing nothing without a Warrant from the Com-

2 Tim. 1. 24, 25.

(*a*) See Doctor *Owen* Reaſon of Faith, *p.* 71, *&c.*

Command and Authority of God, and managing all in a Dependence upon his Promise for Grace and Strength. *In fine*, Let the Love of God be the prevailing and leading Principle in the whole of our Conduct, the only true Foundation of Christian Charity to our Brethren, and of Benevolence and Kindness to all Mankind; and maintain daily Fellowship and Communion with God thro' Jesus Christ, by Faith and Prayer, which, according to our Apostle's Directory, is of singular Use for managing this Duty of contending for the Faith, *Jude ver.* 20. *But ye, Beloved, building up yourselves in your most holy Faith, praying in the Holy Ghost; Keep yourselves in the Love of God, looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal Life.*

We conclude with our Apostle's Doxology, *Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the Presence of his Glory, with exceeding Joy: To the only wise God our Saviour, be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, both now and ever.* Amen.

FINIS.

Φ.RF
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